



Infomat

A Weekly Review

Thursday, March 27, 1997

OVERVIEW

◆ Exports, imports reach record levels

Exports advanced to a record level in January, bolstered by automotive shipments. Imports grew even faster, trimming the trade surplus from December.

◆ Foreigners continue investing in Canadian securities

Foreigners continued their investment in Canadian securities in January. Canadian residents continued to invest in foreign securities.

◆ Annual inflation rate remains stable

The Consumer Price Index annual inflation rate remained unchanged in February. The rate has been stable for three months.

◆ Fewer Canadians receive EI benefits

The number of Canadians receiving regular Employment Insurance benefits dropped in January, continuing the downward trend seen throughout 1996.

◆ Protecting ideas—alternative versus legal strategies

Despite the importance of protecting intellectual property, less than one-quarter of Canadian manufacturing firms use any statutory forms of protection.

Exports, imports reach record levels

Exports advanced to a record \$23.5 billion in January, up 3.1% over December. A surge in automotive shipments was behind the gain, as car companies replenished dealer inventories in the United States. Growth for non-automotive exports was marginal. The most growth was in exports to the United States, but there were gains with all trading partners except the European Union.

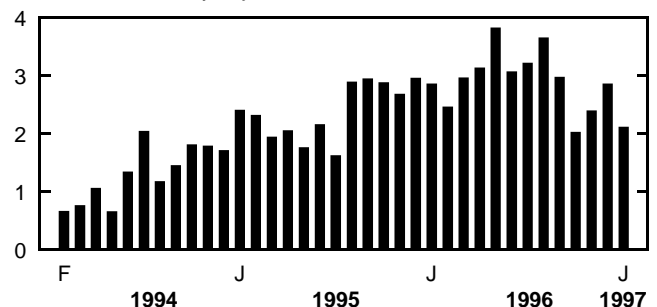
Imports grew even faster than exports in January, rising 7.2% to a record \$21.4 billion. All sectors posted healthy gains, but import demand was especially strong for auto parts, machinery and equipment, and energy products. With the exception of the European Union, imports were up from all trading partners—especially the United States. Compared with the flatter export trend, imports have trended up since mid-1996. This contrasts with the latter half of 1995, when import growth was flat and exports grew steadily.

The faster pace of growth on the import side reduced Canada's trade surplus to \$2.1 billion in January, down from December's \$2.8 billion. A drop in the surplus with the United States had the biggest impact.

(continued on page 2)

Trade balance

\$ billions, seasonally adjusted



... Exports, imports reach record levels

Automotive exports made a strong comeback in January, moving up 23%. Manufacturers were replenishing dealer stocks—particularly cars—in the United States, which were low at year-end due to earlier inventory corrections. Parts exports also gained as U.S. automakers stepped up production. Increased demand from the United States helped boost industrial goods exports (+5.0%); gains were widespread, but sales of metal ores, aluminum, and organic chemicals grew the most. Weaker aircraft shipments helped pull down machinery exports (-2.7%), but full order books bode well for this sector in 1997.

Sales of agricultural products grew (+5.6%) for the second month in a row. Energy exports rose 2.2% due to strong natural gas sales. Shipments of refined petroleum and crude oil edged down and coal exports slipped. Forestry products dropped 5.3% as pulp and paper producers lengthened holiday shutdowns to help shore up inventories, and lumber sales to Japan and the United States fell.

Automotive products gave January imports a solid 10.9% boost. Parts imports led the gain, reflecting the surge in auto production. Trucks (especially from Japan) moved up another 5.3%, while car imports slowed as domestic sales retreated.

Machinery and equipment imports rose for the seventh month, up 6.9%. Industrial machinery and office machines contributed most to the increase, while transportation and communications

Note to readers

Merchandise trade is one component of the current account of Canada's balance of payments, which also includes trade in services. In the fourth quarter of 1996, the overall merchandise trade surplus of \$7.2 billion contrasted with the current account deficit of \$1.7 billion.

equipment registered smaller gains. Aircraft imports continued to drop after November's record. Energy products (+46.7%) and industrial goods (+3.9%) further enhanced imports. Higher purchases of crude oil and refined petroleum brought energy imports to a new high. Gains in industrial goods were pervasive, but chemical, plastics and metal fabricated products were among the fastest growing.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3611–3616, 3618–3629, 3651, 3685–3713, 3718–3720 and 3887–3913.

Canadian international merchandise trade (65-001-XPB, \$19/\$182) will be available shortly. Current account data, which incorporate merchandise trade statistics, services transactions, investment income and transfers, are available on a quarterly basis in **Canada's balance of international payments** (67-001-XPB, \$36/\$120). For further information, contact Suzie Carpentier (613-951-9647; 1 800 294-5583), International Trade Division. (See also "Current trends" on p. 7.)

Foreigners continue investing in Canadian securities

Foreigners continued to invest in Canadian securities in January, purchasing \$3.3 billion for a second consecutive month. Foreign investment was split between Canadian bonds, money market paper and stocks. Canadian residents continued to invest in foreign securities, purchasing \$1.3 billion.

Foreign investors purchased \$2.7 billion of Canadian debt securities, similar to their buying in December. They resumed buying money market paper in January (\$1.6 billion) and continued investing in bonds (\$1.1 billion) for an 11th straight month. Foreign buying of Canadian money market instruments contrasted with two months of heavy selling. Almost 60% of January's investment was short-term financing of the Canadian corporate sector; the remainder was mostly federal treasury bills. Non-residents acquired \$1.1 billion of Canadian bonds, again mainly issued by the corporate sector.

For a fourth consecutive month, foreigners acquired Canadian stocks. They bought \$0.5 billion in January, over 60% of which were new stocks sold in the U.S. market. Canadian stock prices in January, as measured by the TSE composite index, rose 3.1%.

Note to readers

Interest rates: In January, Canadian and U.S. short-term interest rates were again virtually unchanged after declining from mid-1996 through November. The differential on short-term paper remained at 230 basis points at month end with the U.S. rates higher, therefore continuing to favour investment in the United States. Canadian 10-year rates on federal bonds rose slightly over January in tandem with their U.S. counterparts. Those rates are roughly at parity.

Stock prices: After a small 1.5% decline in December, Canadian stock prices, as measured by the TSE 300 index, resumed their climb and registered a 3.1% gain in January 1997. With gains in 8 of 12 months in 1996, stock prices closed 26% higher in 1996 than in 1995. U.S. stock prices, as measured by Standard and Poor's Composite 500 Index, were twice as strong as their Canadian counterparts in January 1997, closing 6.1% higher.

Canadian dollar: The Canadian dollar halted its two-month slide, which saw it lose over two cents against the U.S. dollar. After touching a low of US72.56 cents in early January 1997, it reversed the down trend, closing January at US74.24 cents, up 1.25 cents over the month.

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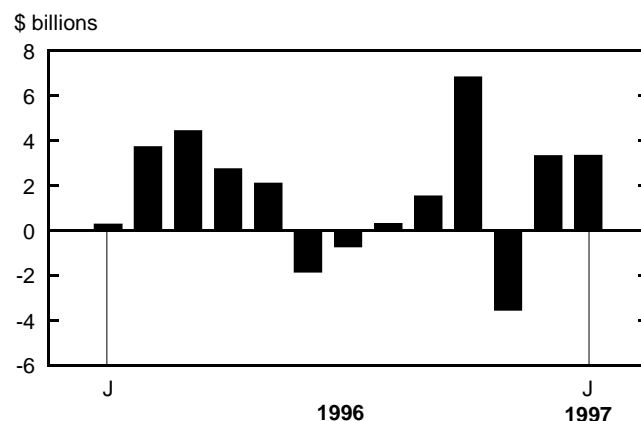
... Foreigners continue investing in Canadian securities

Canadian investors continued to buy foreign securities, mainly stocks. Of the \$1.2 billion invested in foreign stocks in January, 80% went to U.S. stocks. Canadians have switched to buying mainly U.S. stocks over the past four months.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 2330.

The January 1997 issue of *Canada's international transactions in securities* (67-002-XPB, \$17/\$170) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Don Granger (613-951-1864), Balance of Payments Division.

Foreign investment in Canadian securities*



* Includes bonds, stocks and money market paper.

Annual inflation rate remains stable

In February 1997, for the third consecutive month, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) annual inflation rate was 2.2%. This measures how much Canadian consumers paid to buy the goods and services making up the CPI basket this February, compared with what they paid last February. Although consumers have faced major price increases for energy, food, vehicle insurance, new vehicles and university tuition, they have benefited from declining mortgage interest charges.

Between January and February, the CPI edged up 0.1%. Clothing and footwear, gasoline, food, travel tours and traveller accommodation were among the items that rose in price. Lower air fares, owned accommodation charges and telephone service payments largely offset these increases.

Consumer Price Index, February 1997 % change, previous year*

	All-items	Food	Energy	Housing	Transportation
Canada	2.2	2.4	7.2	0.3	5.3
Newfoundland	2.7	2.5	7.0	1.8	4.3
Prince Edward Island	1.6	-0.2	9.3	2.5	3.8
Nova Scotia	3.1	3.6	10.1	2.2	4.5
New Brunswick	2.4	2.2	11.4	1.7	5.8
Quebec	2.0	3.3	5.9	0.7	2.8
Ontario	2.4	0.9	5.9	-0.1	8.3
Manitoba	3.2	4.5	8.7	1.7	5.2
Saskatchewan	2.3	4.5	4.0	1.3	4.1
Alberta	3.1	5.0	16.2	1.9	5.7
British Columbia	0.9	1.8	7.1	-1.3	1.6
Whitehorse	2.1	2.8	7.1	1.1	4.2
Yellowknife	0.4	-1.2	4.9	0.1	4.2

* Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Clothing and footwear prices rose (+1.1% and +0.8% respectively), as they generally do in February when sales end. Gasoline prices rose 1.5%. Since February 1996, gasoline prices have risen 10.8%. The prices of food purchased from stores and from restaurants both increased by 0.2%. Shoppers paid more for fresh vegetables, soft drinks, poultry, and bakery products, but less for fresh fruit and pork. Package holiday costs rose 6.4% on average. Hotel and motel rates tend to rise in February: they advanced 2.4%.

Lower air fares were largely responsible for offsetting overall price increases. Air fares usually drop in January, then increase slightly in February. However, this year they dropped slightly in January, then plunged in February (-9.0%). Lower seat sale prices were available on a number of domestic flights. Owned accommodation charges fell 0.2% as mortgage interest costs continued to drop. And more consumers reduced their telephone costs by using long-distance discount plans.

Across Canada, British Columbia had the lowest CPI increase (+0.9%) between February 1996 and February 1997. Auto insurance premiums dropped and home ownership charges saw an unusually large decline. B.C. price changes for food, furniture, gasoline and new cars were also lower than the Canadian average. Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Alberta had the highest annual increases. Manitoba posted larger than average price increases for food, shelter, and clothing and footwear.

Between January and February 1997, increases in provincial CPIs varied from a low of 0.1% in six provinces to a high of 0.4% in Quebec. A substantial rise in food prices pushed Quebec's rate up.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 7440-7454, 7477 and 7478.

The February 1997 issue of the *Consumer Price Index* (62-001-XPB, \$10/\$100) is now available. For further information, contact Sandra Shadlock (613-951-9606; fax: 613-951-2848; Internet: shadsan@statcan.ca), Prices Division. (See also "Current trends" on p. 7.)

Fewer Canadians receive EI benefits

In January, 619,380 Canadians received regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits, a decline of 6.1% from December. Declines were recorded in all provinces and territories except the Yukon. The downward trend in the number of beneficiaries throughout 1996 continued into January, with levels not seen since the early 1980s.

Regular benefit payments increased 0.8% to \$766 million in January. Seven provinces and territories recorded increases, led by Quebec (+2.3%) and Ontario (+1.2%). Payments have remained flat for the last seven months.

EI beneficiaries receiving regular benefits, January 1997
Seasonally adjusted

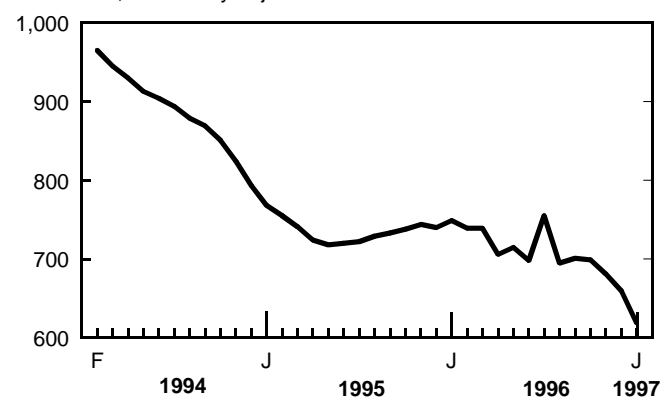
	Total, thousands	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	619	-6.1	-17.3
Newfoundland	37	-2.3	-6.3
Prince Edward Island	10	-2.1	-3.0
Nova Scotia	34	-4.1	-11.3
New Brunswick	39	-4.2	-12.8
Quebec	214	-5.1	-17.1
Ontario	160	-6.3	-13.4
Manitoba	14	-11.2	-26.2
Saskatchewan	10	-10.7	-32.5
Alberta	33	-10.0	-34.9
British Columbia	69	-4.8	-20.0
Yukon	1	7.9	-12.3
Northwest Territories	1	-7.1	-13.4

Note to readers

The discrepancy between the estimated number of regular beneficiaries and regular payments series can be explained by the difference in their time frames. The number of beneficiaries is a one-week census of the month (the week containing the 15th); benefit payments is the total amount of money received by individuals for the entire month.

Number of EI beneficiaries paid regular benefits

Thousands, seasonally adjusted



The number of individuals who applied for Employment Insurance benefits in January increased 3.5% to 241,000, returning to the October 1996 level. Ten provinces and territories recorded increases—Ontario led with an 8.3% rise.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 26 (series 1.6), 5700–5717.

For further information, contact Michael Scrim (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; Internet: labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.

Protecting ideas—alternative versus legal strategies

Despite the importance attributed to protecting intellectual property, less than one-quarter of firms in the Canadian manufacturing sector use statutory forms of protection. Firms are most likely to use trademarks (11%), trade secrets (8.3%) and patents (7.1%).

Although manufacturing firms account for about 50% of employment, a relatively small proportion of them use one of the legal forms of protection. They tend to view alternate strategies—being first in the market or having a more complex product design, for example—as more effective than legal protection. But the value attached to patents increases if a firm is innovative, large, foreign-controlled, and is located in an industry that tends to produce a large number of innovations used by other industries. Such firms think legal protection is effective. All firms view other innate forms of protection as being equally if not more effective than legal

Note to readers

Firms reported their research and development, innovation, technology and intellectual property activities over the period from 1989 to 1991 for the 1993 Survey of Innovation and Advanced Technology.

Statutory protection refers to forms of intellectual property protection enshrined in law or enforceable in courts. It includes patents, trademarks, copyright, trade secrets, secrecy agreements, industrial designs law, integrated circuit topographies and plant breeders' rights.

Non-legal or innate protection refers to industrial design and marketing strategies used by companies to reap the benefit of their innovation. These strategies include being first to market a product or using a complex design that is difficult to copy.

(continued on page 5)

... Protecting ideas—alternative versus legal strategies

forms.

Over 62% of large firms (those with more than 500 employees) use any of the legal forms of protection, while less than 30% of small firms (those with fewer than 100 employees) do so. Small firms place relatively greater emphasis on trade secrets. As firms grow, their focus shifts from trade secrets to patents.

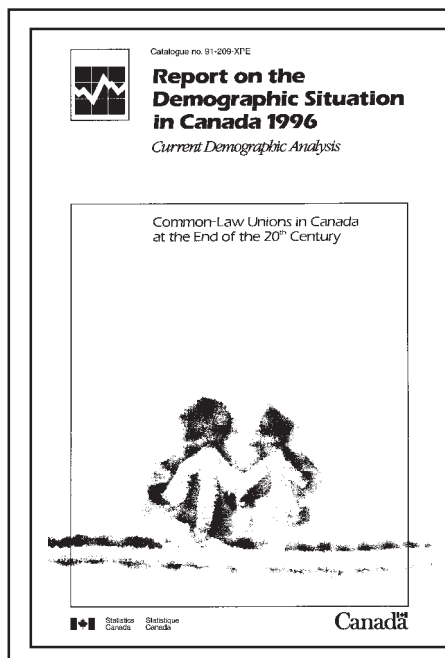
According to the 1993 Survey of Innovation and Advanced Technology, 80% of world-first innovators protect themselves with a form of statutory protection (either in Canada or abroad), but less than half of other types of innovations use legal protection. Moreover, a portion of these innovations only involve new processes that do not lend themselves to patent protection. These

firms tend to rely on secrecy.

Use of intellectual property rights varies dramatically across industries. A core set of industries (chemicals, pharmaceuticals, refined petroleum, electrical products, and machinery) produces many inventions that are used as inputs or as capital equipment in other industries. These core innovative industries make greater use of almost all forms of statutory protection than do other industries, particularly patents and trademarks.

*The publication **Innovation and intellectual property** (88-515-XPE, \$20) is now available. For further information, contact John Baldwin (613-951-8588), Micro-economics Analysis Division.*

New from Statistics Canada



Report on the demographic situation in Canada

1996

The *Report on the demographic situation in Canada 1996* takes stock of the Canadian population, presents the most recent demographic trends in the various regions of the country and compares Canada with other industrialized nations. The report analyses trends in population growth and its components, births, deaths, interprovincial and international migration, marriage, and divorce.

Part II of the report assesses a phenomenon that has grown substantially over the last two decades: common-law unions. The report studies the evolution of common-law unions, the principal factors associated with their spread and reviews some of the consequences. The analysis is based mainly on the results of Cycle 10 of the General Social Survey, conducted by Statistics Canada in 1995.

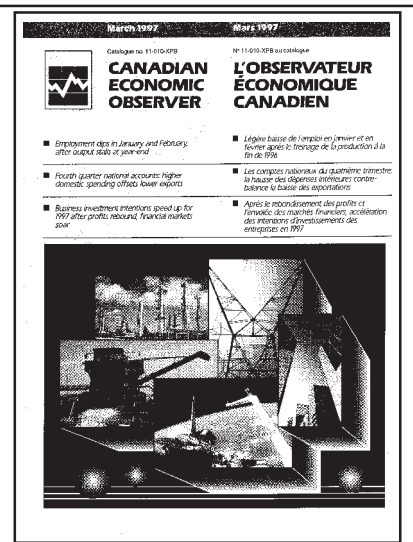
*The **Report on the demographic situation in Canada 1996** (91-209-XPE, \$30) is now available. For further information, contact Jean Dumas (613-951-2327), or Alain Bélanger (613-951-2326; fax: 613-951-2952; Internet: belaala@statcan.ca), Demography Division.*

Canadian economic observer

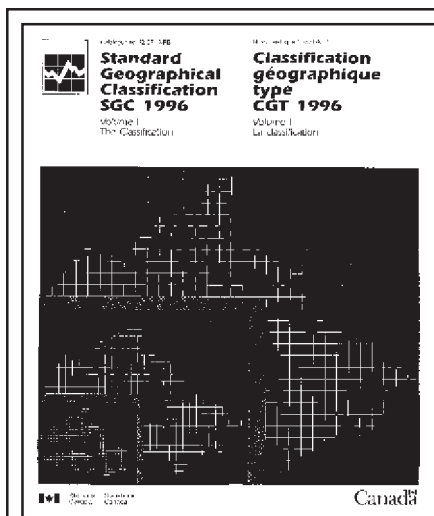
March 1997

The March issue of Statistics Canada's flagship publication for economic statistics, *Canadian economic observer*, analyses the current economic conditions and summarizes the major economic events in February. A statistical summary contains a wide range of tables and graphs on the principal economic indicators for Canada, the provinces and the major industrial nations.

*The March 1997 issue of **Canadian economic observer** (11-010-XPB, \$22/\$220) is now available. For further information, contact Cyndi Bloskie (613-951-3634; Internet: ceo@statcan.ca), Current Economic Analysis Group.*



New from Statistics Canada



Standard geographical classification

1996

The *Standard geographical classification, 1996* (SGC) is a classification of names and codes representing geographical areas of Canada. These areas include provinces, counties and municipalities, which form the three-tiered hierarchy of the SGC, as well as census metropolitan areas, census agglomerations and economic regions. The SGC is used to identify information for particular geographical areas and to tabulate small area data.

The two-volume 1996 SGC replaces the 1991 edition as Statistics Canada's official geographical classification. *Volume I, The Classification*, contains tables of SGC units with their names and codes, tables of related standard areas, an alphabetical index of place names, and lists of changes that have affected names and codes of municipalities since January 2, 1991. This volume is designed as a reference and coding manual. *Volume II, Reference Maps*, shows the location and boundaries of the geographical areas in the Classification. These maps help users relate statistical data to the corresponding geographical areas.

Users of census data should note that the 1996 SGC will provide information on counties (census divisions) and municipalities (census subdivisions). No separate publication is being produced under the Census reference products series.

The Standard geographical classification, 1996 (12-571-XPB, Volume I: \$99; 12-572-XPB, Volume II: \$80) is now available. For further information, contact Richard Fortin (613-951-3445; fax: 613-951-8578; Internet: fortric@statscan.ca), Standards Division.

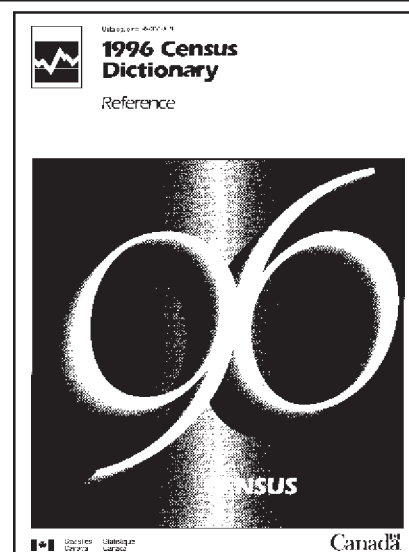
1996 Census Dictionary

The 1996 Census reference products help you make the most of census data. The recently released *1996 Census Dictionary* explains the concepts, terms, variables, and geography elements associated with the 1996 Census.

The publication is divided into five sections. In the first four, the terms and variables are organized and discussed according to population, family, household, and dwelling universes. Each entry also provides background information, including the censuses in which the variable was used and the population for which the data are provided. A fifth section looks at census geography concepts.

A set of appendices adds other information, including some of the census questions used since Confederation and comparisons of various data with previous censuses. Charts, tables and an index help make the publication easy to use.

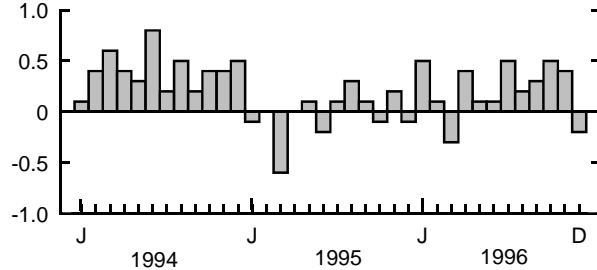
The 1996 Census Dictionary (92-351-XPE, \$25) is now available. For further information, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre.



Current trends

Gross domestic product

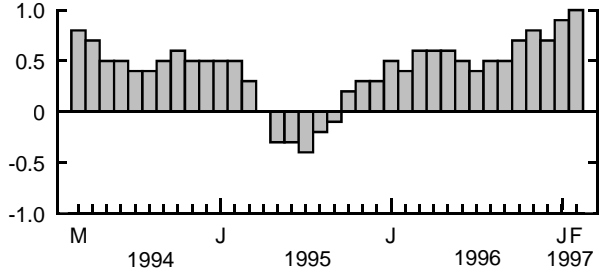
% change,
previous month



Real gross domestic product at factor cost decreased 0.2% between November and December.

Composite index

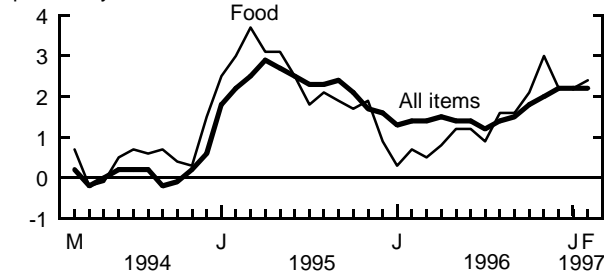
% change,
previous month



The composite index grew by 1.0% in February.

Consumer price index

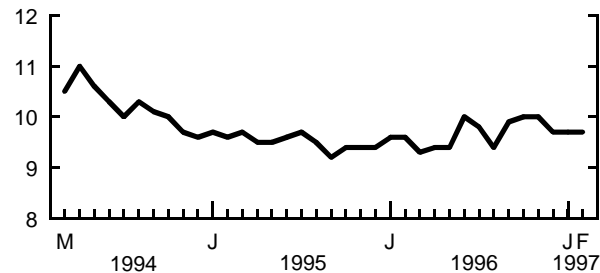
% change,
previous year



Consumers paid 2.2% more for goods and services in February 1997 than the year before. Food prices rose by 2.4%.

Unemployment rate

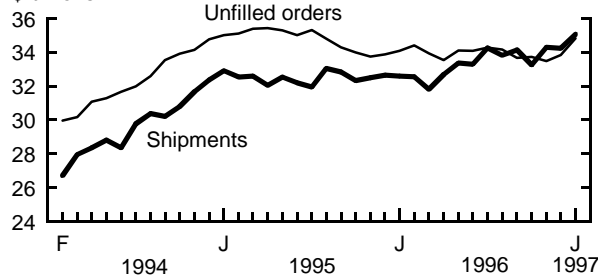
%



In February, the unemployment rate held at 9.7%.

Manufacturing

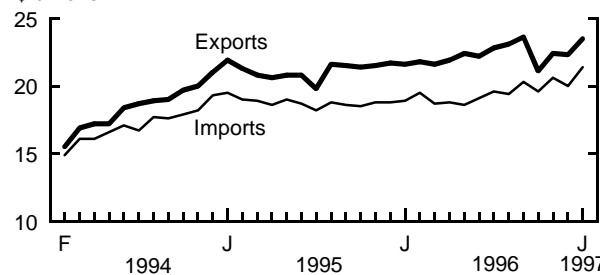
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments rose 2.2% in January to \$35.1 billion. The level of unfilled orders increased 3.0% to \$34.8 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In January, the value of merchandise exports increased 3.1% from December to \$23.5 billion. Imports rose 7.2% to \$21.4 billion.

Note: All series are seasonally adjusted except the Consumer Price Index.

Latest monthly statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
GENERAL				
Gross domestic product (\$ billion, 1986)	December	557.5	-0.2%	2.6%
Composite index (1981=100)	February	189.0	1.0%	8.5%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q4 1996	25.7	5.7%	10.4%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q4 1996	84.8	0.7†	2.4†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	January	18.8	1.4%	5.6%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	January	105.4	-6.3%	12.0%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	February	13.7	-0.1%	0.6%
Unemployment rate (%)	February	9.7	0.0†	0.1†
Participation rate (%)	February	64.6	-0.1†	-0.5†
Labour income (\$ billion)	November	36.5	0.8%	3.6%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	December	593.82	0.2%	2.7%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	January*	23.5	3.1%	8.0%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	January*	21.4	7.2%	13.1%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	January*	2.1	-0.7	-0.7
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	January	35.1	2.2%	7.6%
New orders (\$ billion)	January	36.1	4.3%	9.9%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	January	34.8	3.0%	2.2%
Inventory/shipments ratio	January	1.29	-0.04	-0.09
PRICES				
Consumer price index (1986=100)	February*	134.4	0.1%	2.2%
Industrial product price index (1986=100)	January	129.4	-0.2%	-0.5%
Raw materials price index (1986=100)	January	141.8	0.1%	10.5%
New housing price index (1986=100)	January	132.2	0.2%	-0.6%

Note: All series are seasonally adjusted with the exception of the price indexes.

* new this week

† percentage point

Infomat

A weekly review

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Publications released from March 21 to 26, 1997

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription		
			Canada (C\$)	United States	Other countries
				(US\$)	
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR JUSTICE STATISTICS					
Sentencing in adult provincial courts: A study of nine jurisdictions	1993 and 1994	85-513-XPE	35	35	35
CENSUS					
1996 Census dictionary		92-351-XPE	25	25	25
DEMOGRAPHY					
Report on the demographic situation in Canada	1996	91-209-XPE	30	30	30
GEOGRAPHY					
Standard geographical classification, 1996: The classification	Vol. I	12-571-XPB	99	99	99
Standard geographical classification, 1996: Reference maps	Vol. II	12-572-XPB	80	80	80
HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS					
Labour force update: Youths and the labour market	Spring 1997	71-005-XPB	29/96	29/96	29/96
INDUSTRY					
Construction type plywood	January 1997	35-001-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
New motor vehicle sales	January 1997	63-007-XPB	16160	20/192	23/224
Production and disposition of tobacco products	February 1997	32-022-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
INTERNATIONAL TRADE					
Canadian international merchandise trade	January 1997	65-001-XPB	19/182	22/219	26/255
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY					
Primary iron and steel	January 1997	41-001-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
PRICES					
Industry price indexes	January 1997	62-011-XPB	21/210	26/252	30/294
The consumer price index	February 1997	62-001-XPB	10/100	12/120	14/140
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY					
Science statistics: The effect of country of control on industrial research and development performance in Canada	1993, Vol. 21, no. 2	88-001-XPB	8/76	10/92	12/107
SERVICES					
Software development and computer service industry	1994-95	63-222-XPB	32	39	45

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Publications released from March 14 to 20, 1997 (correction)

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription		
			Canada (C\$)	United States	Other countries
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS					
Canada's balance of international payments	Fourth quarter 1996	67-001-XPB	36/120	44/144	51/168
Canada's international transactions in securities	December 1996	67-002-XPB	17/170	21/204	24/238
CURRENT ECONOMIC ANALYSIS					
Canadian economic observer	March 1997	11-010-XPB	22/220	27/264	31/308
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND TOURISM					
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	1	2	3 Help-wanted index, March 1997	4 Labour force survey, March 1997 Domestic travel, Q1 1996
7 Building permits, February 1997	8	9 New motor vehicle sales, February 1997 New housing price index, February 1997	10	11
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28	29 Employment insurance, February 1997	30 Real gross domestic product at factor cost by industry, February 1997 Field crop reporting series: March seeding intentions		

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